

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 202426

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UN, SENV, XA, PARM

SUBJECT: UN DESERTIFICATION CONFERENCE: AFRICAN PROPOSAL
TO CONDEMN USE OF CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

1. REPORT OF AFRICAN PREPARATORY MEETING FOR UN DESERTI-
FICATION CONFERENCE (FOR CONFERENCE BACKGROUND SEE PARA 4)
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CONTAINS FOLLOWING PROPOSAL: "AN 18TH RECOMMENDATION WAS
PROPOSED THAT WOULD MAKE REFERENCE TO THE ROLE IN DESERTI-
FICATION PLAYED BY BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL WEAPONS, PARTI-
CULARLY WHERE LIBERATION ARMIES HAVE BEEN OR ARE FIGHTING.
IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT THE DESERTIFICATION CONFERENCE BE
ASKED TO GO ON RECORD IN CONDEMNING THE USE OF SUCH WEAPONS
AND SEEK TO PROHIBIT THEIR USE, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA."

2. CONTINGENCY GUIDANCE FOR USDEL: UNTIL WE KNOW THE EXACT LANGUAGE OF THE PROPOSAL, THE US CANNOT TAKE A DEFINITIVE POSITION ON THIS MATTER. FOR DEL'S INFO, FOLLOWING ARE MAJOR ELEMENTS OF ESTABLISHED AND WELL-PUBLICIZED US POLICY IN THESE AREAS. (A) US ADHERES TO GENEVA PROTOCOL, OF 1925, WHICH PROHIBITS USE OF POISON GAS IN WARFARE, AS WELL AS TO BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION OF 1972, WHICH OUTLAWED DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION AND STOCKPILING OF BIOLOGICAL AND TOXIC WEAPONS.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 11850, DATED APRIL 8, 1975, REAFFIRMED PRIOR US RENUNCIATION OF (1) FIRST USE OF HERBICIDES IN WAR, UNDER REGULATIONS APPLICABLE TO THEIR DOMESTIC USE, FOR CONTROL OF VEGETATION WITHIN US BASES AND INSTALLATIONS OR AROUND THEIR IMMEDIATE DEFENSIVE PERIMETERS, AS WELL AS (2) FIRST USE OF RIOT CONTROL AGENTS IN WAR EXCEPT IN DEFENSIVE MILITARY MODES TO SAVE LIVES UNDER LIMITED AND SPECIFIED CONDITIONS. (B) THE US ANNOUNCED THIS SUMMER THAT IT IS SEEKING A BAN ON THE DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION, STOCKPILING, ACQUISITION OR RETENTION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS; AND US AND USSR REPRESENTATIVES ARE CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN GENEVA IN SERIOUS BILATERAL TALKS ON THIS MATTER. WHILE THIS IS AN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT ARMS TECHNOLOGY TO CIRCUMSCRIBE AND TO VERIFY, SOME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE AND WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THE US/

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USSR WORKING GROUP WILL REACH AGREEMENT SOON ON A SET OF KEY ELEMENTS THAT WILL FORM THE BASIS FOR ELABORATION INTO A MULTILATERAL CONVENTION TEXT BY THE CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT. EXACT TERMS OF AFRICAN PROPOSAL TO DESERTIFICATION CONFERENCE SHOULD, OF COURSE, BE TRANSMITTED TO WASHINGTON FOR REVIEW AS SOON AS AVAILABLE.

3. FOR USNATO: AT AUGUST 30 POLADS, US REP SHOULD RAISE QUESTION OF DESERTIFICATION CONFERENCE RESOLUTION ON CBW, INDICATING THAT US DEL HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO COORDINATE WITH ALLIES AT NAIROBI. MISSION MAY DRAW ON GUIDANCE PARAS 2 AS APPROPRIATE.

4. THE UN DESERTIFICATION CONFERENCE (AUGUST 29-SEPT 9 IN NAIROBI) FOLLOWS THE WATER CONFERENCE AS THE NEXT IN THE SERIES OF UN-SPONSORED CONFERENCES ON GLOBAL RESOURCE PROBLEMS. SOME 100 COUNTRIES AND 60 INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND. THE CONFERENCE WAS APPROVED BY THE 29TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT THE URGING OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES AFFECTED BY THE DROUGHT IN THE SAHEL. IT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY DECIDED THAT THE CONFERENCE SHOULD

CONSIDER THE WORLD-WIDE PROBLEM OF THE LOSS OF PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY OF THE EARTH'S ARID LANDS. THE MAJOR OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE ARE THE FOLLOWING: INCREASE IN AWARENESS OF THE DESERT EXPANSION PROBLEM; ANALYSIS OF CAUSES AND EFFECTS; IDENTIFICATION OF THE AREAS MOST PRONE TO DESERTIFICATION; AND AGREEMENT ON AN INTERNATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION. THE US DELEGATION WILL BE HEADED BY UNDER SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR JAMES A. JOSEPH. CHRISTOPHER

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